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REVIEWS.

L'Éthique.—Le Bien et le Mal; Essai sur la Morale considérée comme Sociologie Première. PAR E. DE ROBERTY. Paris, Felix Alcan, Editeur, 1896. Pages xxiv + 237, 8vo.

ONE of the most hopeful indications for sociology is the manner in which the class who formerly devoted their energies to ethics are rallying under the standard of social science. Many of them had long felt that the current ethics presented a barrier to their expansion in the direction of their inclinations, and therefore hailed the new science as affording free scope to their altruistic proclivities. There is a disposition to consider sociology as a sort of scientific ethics, an ethics which recognizes the law of causation in conduct, and therefore holds out some hope of being some time able to bring it under the domain of law.

Professor E. de Roberty de la Cerda, author of a work on sociology and half a dozen others on various philosophical subjects, has openly espoused this new point of view and begins with the present volume a series of works on Ethics. In adopting the name "L'Éthique" for the general designation of the whole series he admits that he does so for the sake of brevity, and that his conception is best expressed as "Prolegomena of an Ethics in process of formation." He hopes to complete the work in four or five volumes, but has already laid it out under nine heads. These titles sufficiently indicate the originality of the scheme. Among them we find the following: "Social Psychism;" "The Constitution of Ethics transformed into Elementary Sociology;" "The Intellectual Series of the Future Amoralité." This last term amoralité" is a sort of keynote to the entire movement voiced in this work. It may be the first use of the word itself, but the thought had been expressed before. On page 114 of *Psychic Factors of Civilization* occurs the following passage: "To remove the obstacles to free social activity is to abolish the so-called science of ethics. The avowed purpose of ethics is to abolish itself. The highest ethics is no ethics. Ideally moral conduct is wholly unmoral conduct. Or, more correctly

stated, the highest ideal of a moral state is one in which there will exist nothing that can be called moral." That work appeared in 1893, but the idea was more fully elaborated in an article on "Ethical Aspects of Social Science" in the *International Journal of Ethics* for July 1896, which had for its thesis the same principle as that defended by Roberty, viz., that ethics, in so far as it is a science, is sociology. In the article on "The Mechanics of Society" in the last number of this JOURNAL (page 250), written before the present work had reached my hands, the action of man in subjugating inanimate nature was spoken of as "innocent or *unmoral* (*amoral* or *anethical*)."

To show that this way of looking at human action in these days of incipient sociology is widespread and a part of the intellectual atmosphere, let me draw attention to a remarkable article by Antonio Llano in the *Philosophical Review* for July 1896, entitled "Morality the Last of Dogmas." On page 374 occurs this passage: "As we pass no moral or condemnatory judgments on the bloody struggles of our animal and savage progenitors, reflection might lead us to look with equanimity upon the probable *amoral* (if I may coin this word) condition of our remote descendants." The fact that Mr. Llano supposes that he is using this word for the first time shows that he is not familiar with the sociological discussion of the question and reached the principle independently and from the standpoint of psychology and philosophy.

Professor Roberty has already gone over the ground of the present volume and of the whole series announced, in a course of lectures delivered at the Institut des Hautes Études in the Université Nouvelle at Brussels, of which the eminent sociologist, Dr. G. De Greef, is the rector and ruling spirit. Everybody knows that that institution was founded as a revolt from the narrow and reactionary tendencies of the traditional university teaching, which claims to possess all the morality of the age, and stifles all originality.¹ His characterization of this spirit is at once so happy and so refreshing that it ought to be reproduced in America:

"The scientific world knows and appreciates at its true value this excellent school, which completes and crowns the work of regeneration of the higher university instruction, due to the happy initiative of an *élite* of noble spirits. Disheartened by the daily and almost universal spectacle in Europe, of sickening pusillanimity, of low jealousies, of mercenary claims to the monopoly of truth, of narrow and sacerdotal

¹ Cf. *Psychic Factors of Civilization*, p. 106.

intolerance, and, in a word, of the unfathomable (*insondable*) mediocrity of the old teaching bodies, maintained in complete dependence upon the classes in power; disgusted and rebellious, but not discouraged, these truly superior minds founded the Université Nouvelle, which, from the manner of its origin, from its principles, from its international character, from the instruction free from all unscientific preoccupation that has been given there for two years, is striving to deserve its early reputation as a great intellectual focus and a sure asylum for the complete liberty of research."

The work is divided into twelve chapters which approach the problem as above stated from as many distinct points of view. The main contention is that the whole of scientific morality is summed up in *sociality*, that the two are one and cannot be kept separate. He insists, and correctly, as I believe from a prolonged study of the *Politique Positive*, that Comte virtually taught this. In adding morals to his hierarchy, as the latest and highest term of the series, he was therefore simply expanding his conception of sociology, which formed the highest term in his *Philosophie Positive*. Viewed in this light the chief criticism upon this action of his falls to the ground. By morality or ethics he means an entirely different thing from the popular conception. He means the principle of association, as distinguished from the facts, phenomena, and history of association. He means the *force* that draws men together, the principle of cohesion, which in its developed aspects becomes the humanitarian sentiment, the love of man for man—"amour pour principe." Those, therefore, who have supposed that the founder of sociology had in his later writings given a subordinate place to that science, may now see that all he did was to subdivide that science and call its active principle by another name. Altruism is only the most advanced stage of the socializing process. The collective idea comes to predominate to so great a degree that the original motive of self-protection is lost sight of.

It is only possible to point out here this one leading characteristic of this work. The reader will find much of special interest to sociology in every chapter. The author is profoundly learned and widely read in all the broad subjects of the age. He has laid under tribute not only all the sociologists, but the philosophers of all ages from Plato to Nietzsche, and the notes appended to the work carry the reader into a wide range of collateral discussion. No sociologist should be deterred by the title from acquainting himself with the work, and it is almost

to be regretted, in the interest of sociology, that the title had not been limited to its last two words: Sociologie Première.

LESTER F. WARD.

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The History of the Last Quarter Century in the United States. By E. BENJAMIN ANDREWS, 2 vols., pp. xxii + 390 and xxi + 409. Three hundred and fifty illustrations. \$6. Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE history which is hardest to understand is that nearest to the student. Precisely this contemporary history is of most consequence to the sociologist who believes that his science should be able to interpret their own times to men of action. The difficulties of writing contemporary history can hardly be more justly and clearly expressed than in President Andrews' preface. The volumes do not profess to contain the final word upon the social reactions of the last twenty-five years in our country. They are recitals of events which seem to a man of keen historical instinct the most significant. President Andrews has little in common with the historical microscopists. He knows the value of details so well that he can subordinate them properly to the general effect, and still present more truth by his method than the sifters of historical diamond dust are apt to reach. In these volumes he is not writing for philosophers, but he is telling a story which ought to fascinate all intelligent Americans. He has frequently chosen to speak of the picturesque instead of the vitally essential occurrences, but in general he has recorded events in which controlling tendencies are betrayed. Although the work will entertain like fiction those who want to read it simply for diversion, I regard it as a most suitable preparation for systematic knowledge of our own times. The author has discounted the inevitable inadequacies of such an attempt, by the qualifications in his preface. He need have no doubt, however, about the fulfillment of his wish "that prospectors traversing this forest hereafter may get on better for our toil in blazing the path."

The two volumes contain much material besides that which originally appeared in Scribner's. The author's well-known views upon the utility of silver as a money metal color his account of the monetary legislation of 1873, and subsequent years, but, in justice to him and to ourselves, it must be admitted by fair-minded men that the argument